NUI Galway – StudentSurvey.ie[1] 2020 results

NUI Galway undertakes the StudentSurvey.ie annually and consistently performs well against other Irish universities in both our participation rates and student satisfaction rates as evidenced by the results of 2 key satisfaction questions below:

The StudentSurvey.ie is designed to focus on student engagement, namely the amount of time and effort that students put into meaningful and purposeful educational activities and the extent to which institutions provide such opportunities and encourage students to engage with them. **Research shows that students who engage more frequently in educationally purposeful activities both in and outside the classroom get better grades, are more satisfied, and are more likely to persist and graduate**. NUI Galway is committed to interpreting and utilising StudentSurvey.ie data to enhance the experiences of our students.

4,079 of NUI Galway students responded to StudentSurvey.ie (formerly known as ISSE) survey in 2020. This number yields a response rate of 38.3% (compared to 37.1% in 2019 and 33.9% in 2018 or to 28.8% Other Unis in 2020 (25.1% Other Unis 2019)).

Of these 1,979 were First Year students (Y1), 1,127 were Final Year students (YF) and 973 were Postgraduate Taught students (PGT) (response rate 47.3%, 36% and 29.1% respectively).

Results: Overall Satisfaction

Table 1 below demonstrates that overall satisfaction amongst NUI Galway students is high, with 87% stating they would come to NUI Galway if they had to start over again, and 82.1% rating their educational experience at NUI Galway as good or excellent. Both of these results are slightly down on the prior year, but this is in line with the trend for the other 6 Universities, and overall NUI Galway satisfaction rates are above the average for the 6 other Universities in Ireland.

Table 1.

"How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?" (Percentage of students who responded positively^)						
	2015	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
NUI Galway (%)	80.2	86.3	84.7	84.7	**83.4**	**82.1**
Other Irish Unis (%)	79.8	85.1	84.9	83.8	**83.3**	**81.8**
"If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?" (Percentage of students who responded positively*)						
	2015	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
NUI Galway (%)	85.1	87.3	88.6	88.6	**87.8**	**87.0**
Other Irish Unis (%)	85.5	87.9	88.4	87.9	**86.8**	**86.5**

^ Percentage of students who responded as good or excellent
* Percentage of students who responded probably or definitely

In terms of the data, the percentage results for all 67 questions are detailed in the **Table 3**

To aid navigation, these questions are grouped under certain **engagement indicators** and the responses for individual questions are combined to create nine related indicator scores. These indicators scores act as "signposts" and are calculated on a scale from 0 to 60 (with the lowest response placed at 0, and the highest placed at 60) and weighted based on cohort and gender.

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[1] StudentSurvey.ie was formerly known as the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)

HO – Higher Order Learning	LS – Learning Strategies	ET – Effective Teaching Practices
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9 Indicator Scores (out of max 60)

The following table (Table 2) provides the weighted calculated score (out of 60) for each of the 9 engagement indicators for both National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) and the average calculated score for the remaining 6 other Irish Universities. The detailed percentage responses per question are detailed in **Table 3**.

Table 2.

Year	2020		2019		2018		2017	
Index	Mean NUIG	Mean Other Unis	Mean NUIG	Mean Other Unis	Mean NUIG	Mean Other Unis	Mean NUIG	Mean Other Unis
Higher-Order Learning	37.29	37.81	38.48	38.25	38.76	37.9	38.44	38.01
Reflective and Integrative Learning	31.86	32.88	32.14	32.47	31.74	32.12	31.38	31.83
Quantitative Reasoning	21.55	21.57	21.03	20.77	20.07	20.07	20.29	20.04
Learning Strategies	32.26	32.66	32.27	32.12	32.08	31.68	31.77	31.22
Collaborative Learning	30.26	30.53	29.81	30.33	29.70	30.26	30.02	29.06
Student-Faculty Interaction	13.50	12.39	14.12	12.82	14.03	12.62	13.69	12.31
Effective Teaching Practices	34.64	34.46	35.28	34	35.25	33.77	35.10	34.1
Quality of Interactions	38.14	38.09	39.87	38.59	39.70	38.42	39.42	38.55
Supportive Environment	28.45	29.19	30.07	30.31	30.37	30.25	30.24	30.58

Note: The colour coding highlights comparison with 'Mean Other Unis', and shows that NUI Galway is below the average score of the other Irish Universities in 6 out of 9 indices in 2020, scoring higher on Student-Faculty Interactions, Effective Teaching Practices and Quality of Interactions. This compares to 2019 when we were below in only 3 of the 9 Indices. Additionally compared to 2019, we declined in 7 out of 9 indicators in 2020 with a slight improvement in Quantitative Reasoning and Collaborative Learning indices.

However our cohort analysis (detailed in Appendix 1) shows that the decline in 2020 in comparison to Other Unis is predominantly due to Y1 indices, which are below Other Unis averages across all indices. In contrast YF and PG outperform Other Unis in almost all index categories with only 2 out of 9 YF indices slightly below Other Unis averages (Reflective and Integrative Learning and Supportive Environment). The responses to the specific questions, detailed in **Table 3**, show the following strengths and weaknesses

NUIG's relative strengths:

Quality of Interactions and Effective Teaching Practices remain our relative strengths, despite experiencing decrease in students answering "Often"/ "Very Often" in these categories.

- **Quality of Interactions**: Students - 91.5%, Academic advisors - 75.2%, Academic staff - 79.5%, Support services staff (career services, student activities, accommodation, etc.) - 71.8, Other administrative staff and offices (registry, finance, etc.) - 72.2
- **Effective Teaching Practices**: Clearly explained course goals and requirements - 72.5%, Taught in an organised way - 73.8, Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points - 76.8%, Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress - 40.9%, Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments - 41.9%

It needs to be noted that the area NUI Galway has lagged behind other Unis averages in the last few years has – Collaborative Learning – experienced increase in 2020 in proportion of students collaborating on their course work and is now very close to Other Unis averages.

NUIG's areas for improving:

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Higher Order Learning, Quality of Interactions and Supportive Environment are the three main areas that call for action for improvement.

- **First Year Students:** Unfortunately in 2020 proportions of Y1 students that positively responded to question in the survey decreased in comparison to last year and in comparison to other Unis Averages.
- **Higher Order Learning**: index is almost 2 points below 2019. The essence of Higher education is to foster Higher Order Learning and Reflective and Integrative Learning, thus making these two areas of high importance. In 2020 the following proportion of students indicated they engaged in HO learning: Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations - 71.5% (72.3% in 2019), Analysing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts   - 65.7% (67.3% in 2019), Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source - 63.2% (67.9% in 2019), Forming an understanding or new idea from various pieces of information -68.9% (670.8%).
- **Quality of Interactions**: is a category that is normally a relative strength for NUI Galway. However in 2020 despite this index to be higher for YF and PGT student than for the same cohorts of Other Unis, it is lower for NUI Galway overall compared to 2019 which brought us closer to Other Unis average. Other Unis experienced fall in this index in 2020 as well. Data in Appendix shows that it is Y1 index of Supportive environment that is below the Other Unis average.
- **Supportive Environment** – NUI Galway score is below other 6 Unis average in 2020 and lower percentage of students responded positively compared to 2019. The proportions off students responding often/very often for each question in this category: Providing support to help students succeed academically - 58.0% (62.5% in 2019), Using learning support services (learning centre, computer centre, maths support, writing support etc.) - 56.4% (58.2% in 2019), Contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.) - 41.4% (44.8% in 2019), Providing opportunities to be involved socially - 55.0% (57.0 in 2019), Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counselling, etc.) - 50.9% (57.6% in 2019), Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)- 26.3% (31.4% in 2019), Attending campus activities and events (special speakers, cultural performances, sporting events, etc.) - 47.1% (50.6 in 2019), Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues - 36.8% (40.6 in 2019).
- **Non-Index**: Some non-index items have lower proportion of students responding "often/very often" and would benefit from improvement: Blended academic learning with workplace experience-39.2% (41.7% in 2019, 38% Other Unis 2020), Worked on assessments that informed you how well you are learning - 39.8% (39.6% in 2019, 38% Other Unis), Asked questions or contributed to discussions in class, tutorials, labs or online - 43.9% (47.4% in 2019, 46.2% Other Unis 2020).

Table 3 Shows the percentage of student responding positively to questions in each indicator category for NUIG and the average for the 6 Other Unis.

Table 3.

Question	2020	2019	Other Unis 2020	Difference 2020-2019	Difference 2020 NUIG-Other
Higher-Order Learning					
Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	71.5	72.3	70.8	-0.8	0.7
Analysing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	65.7	67.3	66.1	-1.6	-0.4

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Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	63.2	67.9	64.7	-4.7	-1.6
Forming an understanding or new idea from various pieces of information	68.9	70.8	70.1	-1.9	-1.2
Reflective and Integrative Learning					
Combined ideas from different subjects / modules when completing assignments	56.8	58.2	59.0	-1.4	-2.3
Connected your learning to problems or issues in society	49.0	47.7	51.6	1.3	-2.6
Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in discussions or assignments	31.4	32.8	23.7	-1.4	7.7
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	51.0	51.7	51.4	-0.7	-0.5
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective	57.7	56.5	58.1	1.2	-0.4
Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept?	63.2	64.8	64.2	-1.6	-0.9
Connected ideas from your subjects / modules to your prior experiences and knowledge	67.6	68.9	69.4	-1.3	-1.8
Quantitative Reasoning					
Reached conclusions based on your analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)	36.4	35.9	36.1	0.5	0.3
Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)	28.6	27.0	29.4	1.6	-0.8
Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information	23.3	24.7	23.8	-1.4	-0.5
Learning Strategies					
Identified key information from recommended reading materials	54.5	56.4	56.1	-1.9	-1.5
Reviewed your notes after class	52.4	52.6	54.0	-0.2	-1.6
Summarised what you learned in class or from course materials	54.2	50.5	52.9	3.7	1.3
Collaborative Learning					
Asked another student to help you understand course material	42.7	41.3	42.9	1.4	-0.1
Explained course material to one or more students	46.0	44.7	46.6	1.3	-0.6
Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students	46.9	46.2	47.2	0.7	-0.3
Worked with other students on projects or assignments	53.4	52.1	54.0	1.3	-0.6
Student-Faculty Interaction					
Talked about career plans with academic staff	17.1	16.4	14.3	0.7	2.8
Worked with academic staff on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)	11.0	12.2	10.2	-1.2	0.8
Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with academic staff outside of class	19.7	19.9	18.0	-0.2	1.7
Discussed your performance with academic staff	16.4	17.9	15.0	-1.5	1.4
Effective Teaching Practices					
Clearly explained course goals and requirements	72.5	72.2	72.0	0.3	0.5
Taught in an organised way	73.8	74.4	72.1	-0.6	1.7
Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points	76.8	74.9	75.9	1.9	0.9

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Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress	40.9	44.5	40.7	-3.6	0.3
Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments	41.9	44.3	42.6	-2.4	-0.7
Quality of Interactions					
Students	91.5	90.8	91.2	0.7	0.4
Academic advisors	75.2	79.0	74.2	-3.8	1.0
Academic staff	79.5	82.3	79.7	-2.8	-0.2
Support services staff (career services, student activities, accommodation, etc.)	71.8	74.8	72.8	-3.0	-1.0
Other administrative staff and offices (registry, finance, etc.)	72.2	75.1	72.1	-2.9	0.2
Supportive Environment					
Providing support to help students succeed academically	58.0	62.5	58.2	-4.5	-0.1
Using learning support services (learning centre, computer centre, maths support, writing support etc.)	56.4	58.2	57.6	-1.8	-1.2
Contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)	41.4	44.8	42.6	-3.4	-1.2
Providing opportunities to be involved socially	55.0	57.0	56.8	-2.0	-1.8
Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counselling, etc.)	50.9	57.6	53.3	-6.7	-2.3
Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	26.3	31.4	26.2	-5.1	0.1
Attending campus activities and events (special speakers, cultural performances, sporting events, etc.)	47.1	50.6	48.2	-3.5	-1.1
Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues	36.8	40.6	38.1	-3.8	-1.4
Non-indicator items					
Asked questions or contributed to discussions in class, tutorials, labs or online	43.9	47.4	46.2	-3.5	-2.3
Come to class without completing readings or assignments*	21.0	20.5	22.9	-0.5	1.9
Made a presentation in class or online	33.3	31.0	32.9	2.3	0.4
Improved knowledge and skills that will contribute to your employability	61.5	63.0	61.9	-1.5	-0.3
Explored how to apply your learning in the workplace	43.9	44.4	41.7	-0.5	2.2
Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities	43.5	42.8	44.8	0.7	-1.3
Blended academic learning with workplace experience	39.2	41.7	38.0	-2.5	1.2
Worked on assessments that informed you how well you are learning	39.8	39.6	38.0	0.2	1.8
Memorising course material	51.6	47.5	47.8	4.1	3.8
Work with academic staff on a research project	49.2	47.4	44.8	1.8	4.3
Community service or volunteer work	55.9	56.3	51.1	-0.4	4.9
Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work	73.8	74.6	73.5	-0.8	0.4
Writing clearly and effectively	57.7	59.5	56.6	-1.8	1.1
Speaking clearly and effectively	52.7	55.3	51.1	-2.6	1.6
Thinking critically and analytically	78.1	78.1	78.1	0.0	0.0
Analysing numerical and statistical information	52.0	51.8	49.7	0.2	2.3
Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills	56.9	57.6	54.8	-0.7	2.1

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Working effectively with others	65.7	65.8	65.5	-0.1	0.2
Solving complex real-world problems	54.0	54.3	52.5	-0.3	1.5
Being an informed and active citizen (societal / political / community)	45.6	46.5	46.8	-0.9	-1.2
How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?	82.1	83.4	81.8	-1.3	0.4
If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?	87.0	87.8	86.5	-0.8	0.5

* Reversed sign as the positive difference has negative meaning

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APPENDIX 1:

	NUI Galway				Other Unis				Difference				NUIG diff 2020-2019	Other Unis 2020-2019
	Y1	YF	PG	ALL	Y1	YF	PG	ALL	Y1	YF	PG	ALL		
Higher-Order Learning	34.55	37.77	42.12	37.29	35.88	37.03	41.86	37.81	-1.33	0.74	0.25	-0.52	-1.19	-0.44
Reflective and Integrative Learning	28.91	32.38	37.24	31.86	30.57	32.83	37.15	32.88	-1.66	-0.44	0.10	-1.02	-0.28	0.41
Quantitative Reasoning	18.86	23.87	24.25	21.55	19.58	22.75	23.99	21.57	-0.72	1.12	0.26	-0.02	0.52	0.80
Learning Strategies	30.11	32.53	36.23	32.26	31.61	31.53	35.58	32.66	-1.50	0.99	0.65	-0.40	-0.01	0.54
Collaborative Learning	28.08	32.68	31.90	30.26	29.50	31.92	31.08	30.53	-1.42	0.76	0.82	-0.27	0.45	0.20
Student-Faculty Interaction	8.81	16.75	19.08	13.50	8.89	14.06	17.00	12.39	-0.08	2.70	2.07	1.11	-0.62	-0.43
Effective Teaching Practices	33.26	33.49	38.67	34.64	33.71	32.31	37.73	34.46	-0.45	1.18	0.94	0.18	-0.64	0.46
Quality of Interactions	36.55	37.27	42.35	38.14	37.68	35.64	41.18	38.09	-1.13	1.63	1.17	0.05	-1.73	-0.50
Supportive Environment	29.40	26.19	29.16	28.45	31.22	26.49	28.20	29.19	-1.82	-0.29	0.97	-0.74	-1.62	-1.12

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